

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12-15, 17-23, 26-33, 40 and 43-47 remain pending in the instant application after the foregoing amendments. Claims 11, 16, 24-25, 34-39, and 41-42 have been canceled.

Applicants have amended the instant application to include the claim for domestic priority from Application Serial No. 09/990,473, filed on November 21, 2001 which claims the priority of U.S. provisional application 60/251,006, which was filed on 12/04/2000. Support for this amendment can be found in the declaration and power of attorney filed with the instant application.

Claims 12-15, 17-19, 23, 28, 40 and 43-45 have been amended to remove the prevention language to facilitate the prosecution of the instant invention.

Claims 12-14, 28, 40 and 43-47 have been amended to add the phrase “[to or in] a mammal in need of such treatment...” for clarity and to facilitate the prosecution of the instant invention.

Claim 15 has been amended to add the phrase, “said disease is an ocular disease”. Support for this amendment is found in the specification, pages 16-17, lines 27-30 and 1-10, respectively.

Claim 23 has been amended to add the phrase, “said diseases selected from rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, contact dermatitis and delayed hypersensitivity reactions”. Support for this amendment is found in the specification, page 17, lines 11-18.

Applicants have amended Claims 1-2 to now define R⁶ as: phenyl, CN, halogen and heterocyclyl. Support for this amendment is found in the specification at page 49, line 6.

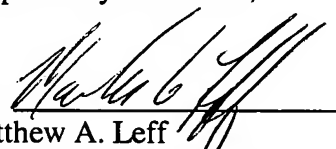
Applicants have further amended Claims 1-2 to define R^a and R^b as “taken together with the nitrogen to which they are attached to form a monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle with 5-7 members in each ring and optionally containing, in addition to the nitrogen, one or two additional heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, said monocyclic or bicyclic

heterocycle optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from R^d". Applicants note that when R¹ or R² is an amine, the amine must be a cyclic amine and not an acyclic amine. Support for this amendment is found in the specification, examples 4-5, 7-18, 20-22, 24-54 and in all the compounds specifically claimed.

Applicants assert that no new matter has been added to the instant application. Applicants expressly reserve the right to file continuation applications to the subject matter not currently being pursued.

Applicants respectfully contend that Claims 1-10, 12-15, 17-23, 26-33, 40 and 43-47 are allowable and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. If a telephonic communication will advance the prosecution of the instant application, please telephone Applicants' representative indicated below. Applicants believe no additional fees are due but the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees required in connection with this amendment to Merck Deposit Account No. 13-2755.

Respectfully submitted,

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